



At the World Water Forum in Istanbul, Turkey, INL water expert and advisory scientist Jerry Sehlke helped 192 nations understand the interdependence of energy and water.

Sehlke presents at World Water Forum

by [Keith Arterburn](#), *INL Communications & Public Affairs*

People tend to think of water and electricity as two separate commodities without realizing how closely they are linked. But water is critical for any nation to meet its energy needs, Idaho National Laboratory water expert Jerry Sehlke told an international audience recently.

The 192 nations attending March's 5th World Water Forum in Istanbul, Turkey, initiated extended discussions about America's Energy-Water Nexus, a concept developed at U.S. national laboratories. As part of a ministerial-level panel at the forum, Sehlke helped guide policy that will increase synergy among international energy, water and food sectors.

Sehlke attended the international forum as president of the American Water Resources Association (AWRA), led the AWRA delegation and made four presentations.

"The nexus concept bywords are 'energy for water' and 'water for energy,'" said Sehlke, an advisory scientist in INL's Energy and Environment Directorate. "These two elements drive one another. With the exception of solar and wind energy, most energy production requires water, while energy is needed to capture, treat, distribute and use water."

"Without adequate quantities and quality of water, it will be extremely difficult for any nation to meet their energy needs," he said.

More than 33,000 people attended the 5th WWF, including nine heads of state, 84 ministers, 250 parliamentarians and scores of technical authorities. More than 100 sessions covered topics ranging from policy formulation to technical discussions under the theme, "Bridging Divides for Water."

Prior to the WWF, Sehlke helped organize four national water dialogues to develop a consensus on the critical water issues facing the United States. Federal water agencies sponsored the dialogues to gain an understanding and develop a consensus about the critical issues that cross the lines of their specific responsibility areas.

"At the World Water Forum, we shared with participants what we learned from the dialogues with other North and South American countries at a preparatory meeting in Brazil in 2008," Sehlke said. "We used their feedback to prepare a presentation for the American region, which was delivered at the WWF."



Sehlke made four presentations to the 5th World Water Forum in Istanbul, Turkey.



Sehlke (third from left) at the Region Americas Meeting during the 5th World Water Forum in Istanbul, Turkey.

"Other nations in the world are just getting started on the Energy-Water Nexus concept, and it has really caught on because we already laid some of the initial groundwork for determining the types of research, technologies, policy issues and technical collaboration possibilities," Sehlke said.

Sehlke served one year as president-elect of AWRA before beginning a one-year term as president in January 2009. His daughter, MacKenzie, landed an internship with the World Water Council and helped develop and run the WWF this year.

"MacKenzie had a great experience and learned how the rest of the world approaches their needs for water," Sehlke said. After the conference, they visited several sites in Turkey before returning home at the end of March.

The WWF was first held in Morocco in 1997, followed by events in the Netherlands in 2000, Japan in 2003 and Mexico in 2006.

"One of the best things coming out of the WWF was to see consensus emerging among countries on water management priorities, R&D, finance needs and policies," he said. "This was an amazing event and an exciting personal experience. It was remarkable to meet and share professional perspectives with so many from around the world."

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